THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) No, Sir. Depletion of forest resource is not being caused by the forest based industries, however, pulp and paper industries are an identified category of highly polluting industries.

(b) Various measures taken to minimise depletion of forest resources and to control pollution of water bodies are :—

(i) To relieve pressure on the country's forests for raw materials, the Government are encouraging manufacture of paper from non-traditional materials including agricultural wastes.

(ii) Import of wood chips and pulp has been liberalised.

(iii) Time bound action plans have been formulated for compliance to the prescribed standards for pollution control for all identified polluting categories of industries including paper industry.

(iv) Standards for water consumption and waste water discharge have been laid down for pulp and paper units and the cess payable by these units is based upon the compliance of these standards.

(c) Following steps have been taken by the Government to encourage the production of hand-made paper :—

(i) 100% exemption on central excise, sales tax and octroi is being provided to the hand-made paper industry.

(ii) An UNDP assisted project has been set up to enhance the performance of the hand-made paper industry in India. This project is being implemented by Khadi & Village industries Commission and the main target beneficiaries are hand-made paper makers which include unemployed youths and women residing in Villages.

(iii) A concessional loan at the 4% rate of interest is being provided for setting up hand-made paper industry.

Ecodevelopment of North Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh

2385. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI : Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal from Andhra Pradesh for the "Eco Development" of North Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) No proposal has been received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh for the Ecodevelopment of North Eastern Ghats since launching of the Scheme.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Ban on Diesel Generating sets in Taj Trapezium and Doon Valley in U.P.

2386. SHRI RAM RATAN RAM : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the installation of Diesel Generating sets is not permitted in the Taj Trapezium and Doon Valley of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) whether it is also a fact that on an average Diesel Generating Sets work at greater efficiency from the environment view point than diesel operated vehicles; and

(c) if so, the reasons for the ban on Diesel Generating Sets when there is no ban on the plying of diesel vehicles in these area ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) From the environmental view point there is no difference between the diesel generating sets and diesel operated vehicles. However, pollution problem from the diesel generating sets is of localised nature and their cumulative impact is more than that of mobile diesel operated vehicles.